

In the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee at Geneva, again in the last session of the General Assembly and in the bilateral discussions this summer between the United States and the Soviet Union, there has been a drawing together of viewpoints, in spite of all the halts and setbacks; the main evidence of this drawing together is the agreed statement on principles which I have mentioned.

Now, there are still important questions relating to disarmament on which the position of the Soviet Union and its allies differs substantially from the position of the Western countries. But I believe that these questions can and must be resolved by a painstaking and business-like negotiation, in which concrete measures and related verification procedures will be examined in detail.

The United States plan is flexible and can accommodate reasonable proposals from the other side, or in fact from any quarter; it is very helpful to have suggestions from any delegation. If the Soviet Union and its allies will demonstrate a similar flexibility and spirit of compromise, it will now be possible to make real progress towards general and complete disarmament.

In their bilateral talks this year, the United States and the Soviet Union could not agree on the composition of the body which should undertake these negotiations. It is therefore incumbent on this Assembly to help reach a decision in this matter -- that is, on the question of what form the negotiating body should have.

The disarmament conference at Geneva in 1960 was conducted by a ten-nation committee. It seems to be generally agreed that the composition of that committee will require some modification. Canada believes that, if negotiations are to be productive and realistic, the negotiating body must have adequate and balanced representation of the major military groupings in the world; this was the principle upon which the Ten-Nation Committee was organized. It will be remembered that that Committee was set up by the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and France.

But we also believe that nations which are not aligned with either of the two sides could play a constructive role in the renewed negotiations. With this in mind, we suggested at the last session that an impartial chairman, assisted by one or two other officers from uncommitted countries, could greatly facilitate the work and improve the effectiveness of the negotiations. We are, however, ready to consider other proposals on the question of composition. I believe that it is essential that other nations should be added to the negotiating body. If agreement on composition cannot be reached in the halls of the United Nations, it might very well be worthwhile to call a meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and give it the responsibility of selecting a negotiating group.